

# APPLE MAGGOT



**Common Name:** Apple Maggot

**Scientific Name:** *Rhagoletis pomonella* (Walsh)

Apple maggot (*Rhagoletis pomonella* Walsh) is a native pest of the Eastern United States and Canada. In 1979 it was discovered in Oregon and has since moved into California, Washington, and other Western states.

## Host

Apple maggots infest apples, pears, plums, apricots, hawthorns and crabapples. They are a major problem in the midwestern and eastern United States and eastern Canada.

## Description

The adult apple maggot is a black-bodied fly slightly smaller than the house fly. The female is larger than the male and has four white bands across the abdomen, while the male has only three abdominal bands. The wings of the fly are crossed by four dark bands.

## Life Cycle

The adult flies emerge from their overwintering puparia (cocoon-like structures) in the ground during the latter half of June and continue to emerge through the middle of August. After emergence, the flies feed, mate, and after 7-10 days, begin to lay eggs. During this time they may be seen resting on the leaves or fruit of apples and other host plants, lapping up drops of honeydew or moisture with their fleshy mouthparts. The female has a sharp ovipositor with which she punctures the skin of the apple and inserts her minute whitish egg into the pulp of the fruit. A large number of eggs may be deposited in a single fruit, and fruits of late varieties become dimpled and pitted as a result. The eggs hatch in 4 to 6 days, young maggots beginning at once to tunnel through the fruit, leaving brown trails. Severely infested fruits often fall to the ground early. The numerous trails in the fruit reduce the inside of the apple to a brownish, pulpy mass and render it unfit for consumption. The full-grown maggot, which is about 10 mm (1/8 inch) long, leaves the fallen fruit and burrows into the soil to a depth of 25-50 mm (one to two inches). Here it forms a puparium, the stage in which it overwinters.

## Damage

Signs of the infestation on the fruit are minute egg punctures in the skin and pitted areas on the surface. In late-season varieties, the injury usually appears as corky spots or streaks in the flesh. In the varieties ripening during July, August and September, open tunnels may occur. Rot-producing organisms follow the maggots, causing rapid decay of infested fruit.

